



Book Design & Production

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## What is a Publisher? How does that differ from a “book producer” like BW&A Books?

When we say that BW&A is not a publishing company, we’re sometimes asked what that means. So here is a brief description of some of the functions of a publisher.

### A PUBLISHER:

#### *a. Selects and vouches for the book’s content.*

Publishers select or commission a particular manuscript because (a) they find it worthy of public dissemination and/or (b) because they expect its sales will be a commercial success. One of the most essential functions of a publisher is to “vouch” for the content of a book by putting their imprint on it.

BW&A doesn’t place our imprint on books we work on; instead, our client’s imprint usually appears on the spine and title page. Normally BW&A is not involved in developing a manuscript’s concepts, research, or writing.

#### *b. Finances the project, and benefits from sales.*

Publishers provide the funds for the work done to create a book: editing, design, typesetting, and manufacture. Publishers receive the revenue from sales of a book. The hope, of course, is that income will exceed expenses. But that calculated risk is undertaken by the publisher.

In contrast, BW&A Books provides services to publishers. We act as agents for our clients. It’s somewhat similar to a general contractor arranging for and supervising the construction of a building. BW&A is responsible for quality work, done on time and on budget. But, at the end of the day, our *clients* own the finished books, not us.

#### *c. Markets and distributes the book to the public.*

Once a book has been printed and bound, the publisher usually handles (or arranges for someone else to handle) the sale of the book to the public. In the case of an established publisher, this might include: listing the book in their catalog; calling on bookstores to encourage them to place orders; arranging for marketing strategies to raise awareness about the book to its intended audience, etc.

BW&A can handle all the stages of book-making that fall between a manuscript and finished books. We can and do create brochures or other sales materials for our clients. But once bound books are delivered to our client’s warehouse, our involvement is usually complete.

We hope this information helps explain some of the differences between what a publisher does, and what BW&A Books does. We provide publishing services both to established publishers and to organizations wishing to publish for the first time. We would welcome a chance to explore how we might be of service to you.